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A3 4. (Amended) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein said resist hard mask layer is selected from the group consisting of a silicon oxide, [or] a silicon nitride, [or] a silicon oxynitride, [or] a silicon carbide, [or] and a silicon oxycarbide layer.

AW 6. (Amended) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein said fluorine-containing gas is selected from the group consisting of SF₆, [or] NF₃, [or] C₂F₆, [or] CF₄, [or] CHF₃, [or] CH₃F, [or] CH₂F₂, and [or] mixtures thereof.

REMARKS

Claims 3, 4, and 6 have been amended to more precisely claim the invention according to conventional practice before the United States Patent and Trademark Office. Claims 1-16 are presented for examination. No new matter is being added herewith. Should there be any questions concerning this application, the Examiner is respectfully invited to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number appearing below.

Respectfully submitted,

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